
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 4

- ☒ Scoring Guidelines
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Question 4: Argument Essay**5 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.	Responses that earn this point: - Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. - Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning as to whether parliamentary or presidential systems more effectively check executive power using one or more of the provided course concepts: term limits, removal of the executive, and elections.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“Parliamentary systems are more effective than presidential systems at checking executive power.”</i> <i>“Presidential systems are the most effective system for containing executive power.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <i>“The executive in a parliamentary system is chosen from the national legislature.”</i> <i>“Nigeria and Mexico are two course countries with presidential systems.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: <i>“Presidential systems more effectively limit executive power because presidents are limited in the number of terms they can serve or the number of times they can run for office.”</i> <i>“Parliamentary systems more effectively limit executive power because legislative and executive powers are combined, and it is easier to remove the executive in a parliamentary system.”</i> <i>“Presidential systems more effectively limit executive power because the legislature is elected separately and can be controlled by a different party.”</i>
	Additional Notes: - The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. - A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row B Evidence (0–2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence from a course country relevant to one of the course concepts in the prompt.	2 points Provides <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries relevant to one or more of the course concepts in the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: - Do not provide any accurate evidence. - Provide evidence that is not relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	Responses that earn 1 or 2 points: Provide specific and relevant evidence from required course countries, relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	
	Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence that is not specific “Parliamentary systems are present in many course countries.” Provide evidence that is not relevant to course concepts in the prompt “The Nigerian president serves as both head of state and head of government.” “The United Kingdom has two dominant political parties in its parliament.”	Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence (one example is one piece of evidence): “In Mexico, presidents can only serve one six-year term.” “In the United Kingdom, the prime minister can stay in the office indefinitely.” “In Nigeria and in Mexico, presidents can be removed by the legislature at any time through an impeachment process.” “In the United Kingdom, the prime minister can be removed by the legislature through a vote of no confidence.” “In the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister’s mandate is indirect, through the legislature.” “In Mexico and Nigeria, the president has a direct mandate from the people through direct elections.”	
	Additional Notes - A response does not need to earn the point in Row A to earn points in Row B. - A response does not need to explain the relationship between the evidence and the claim or thesis to earn points in Row B. (That explanation is evaluated in Row C.)		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis. Examples that do not earn points: • <i>“In Mexico, the presidential system functions better than if they had a parliamentary system.”</i> • <i>“Having an impeachment process in Nigeria and/or Mexico strengthens the power of the legislature.”</i> • <i>“In the UK, the fusion of powers between the branches of government limits the prime minister.”</i>	Responses that earn this point: • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis. Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis: • <i>“In a presidential system, executive power is checked by the number of years they can hold office. Term limits can reduce the likelihood of a dictator emerging.”</i> • <i>“Impeachment is a limited check on executive power because it is a difficult process, while the vote of no confidence process for removing a prime minister is easier and can be done nearly any time.”</i> • <i>“Direct popular mandates offer the president a source of legitimacy outside of legislative support and can therefore make it difficult to check executive power.”</i>
	Additional Notes: • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. - May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.	Responses that earn this point: Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.
	Examples of responses that do not earn the point: Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis <i>“Some people say that presidential systems more effectively limit the power of the state because they are limited to a certain number of years, which prevents them from being able to accomplish policy goals.”</i> Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <i>“Some people say that parliamentary systems are better because they have a mechanism for removing the executive more easily, that provides a check on executive power.”</i>	Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include: <i>“Some might argue that term limits are not an effective check on executive power because once a president is in their final term of office, they are no longer held accountable by voters through reelection; however, term limits are a more effective check because presidents are eventually removed from power.”</i> <i>“While some claim that parliamentary systems do not check executive power because the legislature and executive are fused, the fact that prime ministers can be removed from office with a simple majority vote is a stronger limit on executive power.”</i>
Additional Notes - To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). - Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.		

● Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Presidential systems more effectively check executive power due to their strict term limits as well as the ability of the legislature to ~~to~~ remove the executive through impeachment.

To begin, presidential systems effectively check executive power through ~~strict~~ term limits. For example, Mexico has ~~at~~ a term limit of 6 years for the president, and the president can not be re-elected. This means the president can not become a dictator as they ~~are~~ ~~to~~ are not allowed to stay in power ~~forever~~ forever, effectively checking the power of the executive.

Furthermore, presidential systems have a legislature that can remove the executive through impeachment. For instance, Mexico's lower house of the legislature ~~the power to impeach the president~~ the Chamber of Deputies, has the power to impeach the president. This is a system of checks and balances where the legislative branch is able to check the power of the executive branch in Mexico's presidential system ~~by~~ by removing the executive.

~~Although it is true~~ It is true that the ~~the~~ United Kingdom has a parliamentary system where the executive can be removed through a vote of no confidence. However, this rarely happens, and in reality, there is no effective way to check the power of the prime minister;

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

they are able to pass almost any policy they want. ~~they~~

All in all, presidential systems more effectively check executive power than ~~presidential~~ parliamentary systems since they have strict term limits and can remove the executive using the legislature.

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Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Parliamentary systems check executive power more effectively than presidential systems, as ineffective ~~the~~ chief executives can be removed more efficiently and easily.

In the United Kingdom, a unitary, parliamentary system, votes of no confidence can be used to remove ~~an executive~~ the prime minister from their position. Former prime minister Liz Truss was removed by a vote of no confidence prior to current prime minister Rishi Sunak taking charge. This is an extremely easy and effective check on executive power, because it can be called at any time, and it goes into effect immediately. The ~~executive~~ prime minister's power is significantly checked, because with enough disapproval in Parliament, they can be removed at any time.

Also in the United Kingdom, there is no fixed election schedule. ~~There is a fixed election schedule~~ Between the 2019 election and the most recent election, an election could have been called at any point. This flexible election schedule often leads to ineffective prime ministers having short terms, and effective prime ministers having long terms. This is a significant check on executive power, as prime ministers need widespread support in order to hold on to power. Although I view the flexible election schedule as a check on executive ~~power~~ power, some claim that it only increases executive power. These people cite the fact that the elections ~~are~~ ~~called~~ in the UK are called by the prime minister, and this is often done ~~only~~ at times that are politically advantageous to them.

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● **Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A parliamentary system ~~more~~ more effectively checks executive power than a presidential system due to the separation of power in a parliamentary system in contrast to a presidential one. Factors such as elections, and removal of the executive affect this.

To start, parliamentary systems are more effective because a prime minister has to be in good standing with the house of commons. The house essentially has one over the leader. Currently the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is in good standing with the house. They are who ~~brought~~ brought him officially in the office and can take him out. To further expand in a parliamentary system there is a simple vote of no confidence which can quickly take a prime minister out of office. ~~Due to this, a Prime minister is more likely to try and be on the good side of the house, making their check more effective.~~

Subsequently, a presidential check is typically less effective. Focusing on the removal of an executive, the process is more strenuous than one of a parliamentary system. In a presidential one there is an impeachment that can be harder to ~~execute~~ ^{execute} than ~~a~~ ^{vote} of no confidence. For example, if Congress wanted to remove the President of Mexico but the Moreno party has more representatives

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then it most likely won't be fully executed. In this the President has a little more power in a Presidential system if the numbers are on their side, therefore making a Parliamentary check more effective.

To continue, a ~~Parliament~~ check on the executive power ^{in a presidential system} can be more effective in some cases ~~blatant~~ such as a veto. A veto can be overridden by the Congress which can limit the executive's power and is a very beneficial check.

In all, the parliamentary system more effectively checks the executive power due to the precautions that the executive has to take in order to be in good standing with the House.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Question 4 **Argument Essay**

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of parliamentary and presidential systems and their relative constraints on executive power, while using one or more of the course concepts of term limits, removal of the executive, or elections. Students were expected to write an argumentative essay using each of the following skills: articulating a defensible claim/thesis; supporting the claim with two pieces of relevant evidence from a course country; using reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supported the thesis; and using concession, rebuttal, or refutation to respond to an alternative perspective. Specifically, students needed to offer a thesis demonstrating understanding of presidential and parliamentary systems and their impacts on executive constraint, using the course concept(s) to establish the connection between the executive structures and the concepts. Students needed to demonstrate knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from the countries that reflected the course concept(s) used in their thesis. Students also needed to demonstrate their understanding of how the evidence they described was linked to the relationship between the type of system and constraints upon executive power. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternative explanations by describing an alternative thesis, then justifying their concession, rebuttal, or refutation.

Sample: 4A

Score 5

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 1

Alternative Perspectives Score: 1

(A) The response earned 1 point for a thesis that establishes a clear line of reasoning using two course concepts by stating, "Presidential systems more effectively check executive power due to their strict term limits as well as the ability of the legislature to remove the executive through impeachment."

(B) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of specific evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concepts. The response earned 1 point by stating, "Mexico has a term limit of 6 years for the president, and the president can not be re-elected." The response earned 1 point by noting that, "Mexico's lower house of the legislature, the Chamber of Deputies, has the power to impeach the president."

(C) The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the thesis by stating, in reference to Mexico's term limits, "This means the president can not become a dictator as they are not allowed to stay in power forever, effectively checking the power of the executive." The response could also have earned credit for reasoning in reference to Mexico's

Question 4 (continued)

impeachment process, by stating, “This is a system of checks and balances where the legislative branch is able to check the power of the executive branch in Mexico’s presidential system by removing the executive.”

(D) The response earned 1 point for describing an alternate perspective and refuting, conceding, or rebutting that perspective by stating, “It is true that the United Kingdom has a parliamentary system where the executive can be removed through a vote of no confidence. However, this rarely happens, and in reality, there is no effective way to check the power of the prime minister; they are able to pass almost any policy they want.”

Sample: 4B

Score: 4

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 1

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(A) The response earned 1 point for a thesis that establishes a clear line of reasoning using a course concept by stating, “Parliamentary systems check executive power more effectively than presidential systems, as ineffective chief executives can be removed more efficiently and easily.”

(B) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of specific evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concepts. It earned 1 point for addressing removal of the executive within the United Kingdom by stating, “In the United Kingdom ... votes of no confidence can be used to remove the prime minister from their position.” The response earned 1 point for evidence for addressing elections within the United Kingdom by stating, “there is no fixed election schedule ... This flexible election schedule often leads to ineffective prime ministers having short terms.”

(C) The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis. After describing a recent vote of no confidence in the United Kingdom, the response reasons, “This is an extremely easy and effective check on executive power, because it can be called at any time, and it goes into effect immediately.”

(D) The response did not earn a point for describing an alternate perspective and refuting, conceding, or rebutting that perspective. The response offers an alternative perspective on the evidence used to support the original argument, by stating, “Although I view the flexible election schedule as a check on executive power, some claim that it only increases executive power,” but the response does not refute, concede, or rebut the alternative perspective.

Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

Score: 2

Claim/Thesis Score: 0

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 0

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(A) The response did not earn a point for a thesis establishing a clear line of reasoning using one of the course concepts. Separation of powers is not one of the provided course concepts. The thesis refers to elections and removal of the executive but does not indicate how those concepts distinguish presidential and parliamentary systems.

(B) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of specific evidence from one or more of the course countries that is relevant to one or more of the provided course concepts. It earned 1 point for addressing removal of the executive in the United Kingdom by stating, “in a Parliamentary system there is a simple vote of no confidence which can quickly take a prime minister out of office.” The response earned 1 point for evidence for addressing removal of the executive in Mexico by stating, “In a presidential one there is an impeachment that can be harder to execute than a vote of no confidence. For example, if Congress wanted to remove the President of Mexico but the Moreno party has more representatives then it most likely won’t be fully executed.”

(C) The response did not earn a point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence and the thesis because the response does not have a valid thesis.

(D) The response did not earn a point for describing and responding to an alternate perspective because the response does not have a valid thesis.